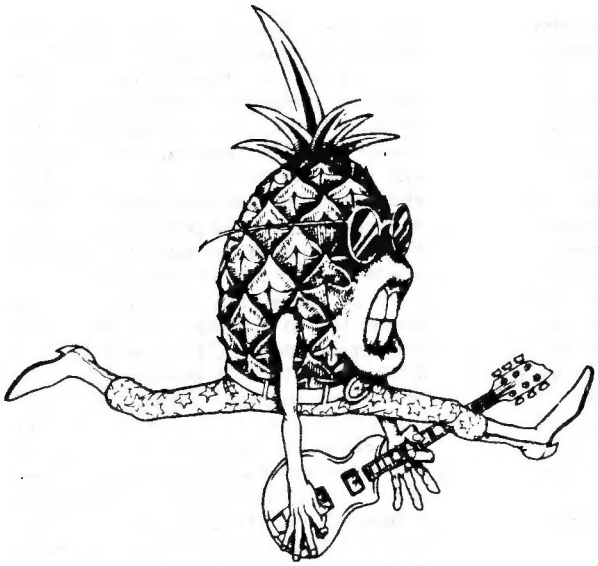

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Congratulations to **Brad** and **Cindy Foster**. They were married the 14th of September in Arlington, Texas.

Dave Sim's **CEREBUS** continues. See your local dealer for the latest issues.

Higashi no kaze ame.

You can get **DOUBTS AND VISIONS 1** for **$1.50 pp** from Ben Adams, 1305 Ea. Denny Way, #107, Seattle, WA 98122.

David Boyle has done a nice mini-comic he calls **MAGPIE 1**. It's $1/stamp from 5294 Tobin St., #12, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3H 1S2.

Would you believe a minicomic adaptation of James Joyce's **ULYSSES?** A buck from David L. Lasky, 2831 Hogan Ct., Falls Church, VA 22043. Nice art and never boring. I found parts of Joyce interesting in my college days, but whole sections of **ULYSSES** are so tedious and convoluted . . . Lasky wants to do a magazine. Ask for his flyer.

EL VIBORA 140 is $10 pp from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Reprints Crumb's adaptation of Sartre's **LA NAUSEE** in Spanish. Adults.

You can see a very nice picture of Molly Ringwald's lips in the current issue of Joe Bob Briggs' **WE ARE THE WEIRD**. I enjoyed that along with JB's rap about his various addictions and his review of the renaissance faires. Worth two bucks. POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221.

For you people who sit and argue about whether Dreyer's or Ben and Jerry's is the best ice cream, the two are partners. Same company.

PROPAGANDA WAR 10 is available for a stamp from Clark Dissmeyer, POB 1531, Kearney, NE 68818.

BILL GRAHAM
[1931-1991]

Bill Graham died with his boots on. He was on his way back to Corte Madera in his helicopter and crashed into a power pole near Vallejo, California. He had just seen Huey Lewis and The News at the Concord Pavilion. He was 60. I never knew Graham personally, but I saw him many times over the years. He got into the rock and roll business more by accident than anything else. I was at the Fillmore when Bill put together a benefit for what was called the Artists' Liberation Front in 1965. There were actors there from The Committee, San Francisco Mime Troupe [with whom Graham worked for a while], and a lot of sixties groups that have long dropped out of the limelight. Allen Ginsberg and Michael McClure were there. People seem to have forgotten that there was more of an artistic community in Haight-Ashbury and music was only a part of it, not the essence. I saw Mike McClure read his poetry at the Fillmore. I saw Lenny Bruce perform there. I saw plays like McClure's THE BEARD in which Jean Harlow met Billy the Kid in Eternity. I saw groups like The Fugs and The PH Factor Jug Band and The Cleanliness and Godliness Skiffle Band. The focus was not at all on rock and roll music, indeed, some of the groups were a lot closer to folk and country than they were to rock. Bill Graham, never a racist, booked all the major black performers he could find and it was a real trip to see black and white bands playing together on the same stage. You didn't see that very often.

After the ALF benefit, Graham continued to book shows at the Fillmore and they were always a lot of fun. Bill had everything there from free balloons and lollipops to free chalk for people to draw pictures on the floor. He had strobe lights and movie projectors and while the bands played onstage there was always a light show. The Fillmore was an environment and what went on there was more closely related to an art happening than a simplistic rock dance. Graham was always there to announce the bands, talk to people, clean up, whatever. At the end of every evening when we were filing out the door onto Fillmore Street he would be there in the checkout booth handing us a poster for the next week's show. These posters now go for a lot of bucks to private collectors and not a few of them went up in flames in the recent fire in the Oakland Hills.

I know Graham was a tough businessman and a survivor in a nasty business and I have heard a lot of negative things about him, but I never had to deal with him in that way. When I was writing for the Los Angeles FREE PRESS, I used to stop in his office once in awhile and he was always friendly to me. There are people who are down on Graham because he made it big, but if you subtract Graham from what has happened in music in the past twenty years, what do you come up with? He managed and got top dollar for a lot of musicians who were playing small clubs for peanuts before he came along.

Graham is owed by all of those who value the poster art. He recognized the talents of many young artists who came to the Bay Area in the late sixties and gave them a medium for expressing that talent.

Bill Graham died on October 25, 1991, and his funeral on October 28, 1991, was attended by many of the now famous and notorious. --Clay Geerdes

A Biography of Thorne Smith

I have finished and desktop published a few copies of my biography of James Thorne Smith, the creator of **TOPPER**.

The book runs 140 pages and includes a bibliography of Smith and a fairly complete list of secondary references. Those interested in the life and literary career of this neglected humorist may get a copy of **THORNE SMITH: AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN HUMORIST** from me. **$20 postpaid.** Signed on request. **Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707.**

-Clay Geerdes.

BABY SUE goes on being a nasty foulmouthed little girl in the latest issue [v. 3, #2] and you can suffer all this invective for $2. POB 1111, Decatur, GA 30031-1111. Back issues available.

Jim Strauss and Emilie Cunningham sent me a copy of their tabloid, **COMIC RELEASE**. Strips and stuff. They print stuff, so some of you cartoonists might want to check them out. Send a buck for a sample copy. POB 20661, Seattle, WA 98102.

CITY LIMITS GAZETTE is coming out every two weeks now, says Steve Willis, and the latest has a nice rap with Shary Flenniken within. Send a buck and get a sample. POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390.

ACID MAN SOCIETY 18 is 50¢/stamp from **CW**, POB 7094, 94707. Age statement required on this one. Over 21 only.

CRUMB IN FRANCE

There is a retrospective of the art of **Robert Crumb** currently on tour in Europe. It will be shown at the 19th Annual Comic Salon in Angouléme, France.

The Festival runs from January 23-27 in the National Center for Comics and Images, but Crumb's art will remain on display through March. A life-sized status of a Vulture Demoness is being constructed under Crumb's supervision for the occasion. The retrospective will move to Barcelona, Spain in the Spring, then to Harleem, Netherlands, and over to Berlin in Germany. **Information** is available from **Jean-Pierre Mercier, Comics Festival, 121 Route de Bordeaux, 16,000 Angouléme, France.** I suspect there will be a poster and program book about which collectors will wish to query. No doubt some of our local dealers will have a few, Bud Plant perhaps.

SO LONG, UNCA WALT!

Well, I don't agree with the current analysis of the fall of Disney comics. I think the company has acted in bad faith since the beginning by pricing the comics out of the kid market [$1.50 is *not* what a parent is going to spend for a comic book, particularly one that is full of house ads for Disney products, hence more of a catalog than a comic book in the first place.]. by exploiting foreign artists, and, basically, forgetting about what Disney has always stood for. I'm not surprised that **MICKEY MOUSE** didn't sell in the millions and I don't see why the company is. Most adults are sick of the character and their kids could care less. Today's five-year-old can name all four Ninja Turtles and knows all about Super Mario and, while he recognizes Mickey Mouse from all the tv ads, he doesn't really care about him. The little kids love Raphael or Michaelangelo. The people I talk to who are into Mickey are much older and the Mickey they like is definitely not the character who appeared in the recent run, but the one styled for the cartoons by Ub Iwerks and drawn in strip form for 45 years by Floyd Gottfredson. The new Mickey simply could not compete in today's kid market. How could he? I analyzed the first story in a previous issue of **CW** and believe me the plot was far beyond any five-year-old.

Now I am hearing that the guys who run Disney are going to concentrate on producing comic books aimed at the collector market. What kind of crap is that? What collector market? I've seen this organized collector hustle gathering speed since the early seventies and one thing is certain--almost none of the books that come out with collector's item plastered across the cover is worth the cover price let alone worth speculating. What is **HOWARD THE DUCK** 1 worth? How about **SHAZAM 1**? Come on, you guys, stop hustling the kids. Do something honest for a change. In a few years this whole comic hustle is going to come crashing down around your ears. Early forties issues of **WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES** are collectable because they are truly rare and hard to come by. Today's comics with their huge print runs and mass distribution aren't going to be worth as much as the mylar bags they are stored in a few years down the line. Hell, every kid in town has the same box of the same X-TURDS in the same plastic bags in the same acid-free box.

The fate of Roger Rabbit is significant. Here is a character done by committee, one of the silliest in the history of the medium. Like everything done by the product-oriented bottomliners at contemporary Disney, the character was hyped to death before anyone had seen him on film and when he did appear in the mallplexes he came on like a sledgehammer. Roger was just plain stupid and kids do not identify with stupidity. They want to be hip, not dumb. What kid could identify with Roger's continual pratfalls and his duh-duh stumblebum nature? That stuff went down the tubes with music hall comedy. The less said for that little asshole Baby Herman, the better. Talk about a character who should have been drowned in the inkwell at conception. Who cared if Roger saved him in those repetitive Averyesque cartoons? I was hoping the little shit would fall off screen and disappear after the first couple of swiped gags. And I was right about Roger. He didn't survive. For all the Disney hype, he was a failure in the comic stores and his titles have been dumped. Talk about fidelity to the collector market!

What bugs me about Disney is that the company is super successful and doesn't have to use the cons of the toy companies that are now commissioning comic books and tv series that are nothing but ads for their dolls and games. They don't have to do the Care Bears and He-man shit, so why are they doing it? Disney's comic division could afford to do some experimental stuff, to buy some interesting funny animal art from different cartoonists and let it stand on its own. Why does everything the company produces have to look just alike? Why not let some of that insipid cuteness rest in peace with Walt in his crypt? Why not subsidize some young cartoonists and take a loss once in awhile? Put something back instead of being so damned greedy.

These days it is possible to distill imaginative ideas into a series of formulae and run them through various forms via computer graphics, but what comes out is usually the same stuff. There are, believe me, more ideas in a single early Barks duck story or Jack Cole Plastic Man than I have seen in most recent issues of stuff like **ROGER RABBIT** or **TAIL SPIN**. As a boy, I always had the feeling that Barks and Cole were playing with me, keeping me guessing, entertaining me at the same time that they were challenging me to keep up with their imaginations. What was and is missing in the studio produced art running in the latest Disney comic books is the personality of a Barks or a Cole. Now bear in mind that I had no idea who Barks was in 1945 because his name was never on the stories, but I knew him anyway, even when he was drawing Barney Bear or Porky Pig. He managed to manifest himself through the art and those who are simply tracing and redrawing his ideas today can never do that. They are what they are, factory workers turning out product for so much a page. There is no love in their work and very little interest. They have the technical expertise, but not the creativity.

Whenever I think of Disney, I can't help but remember Disney suing Dan O'Neill's Hell Comics for "tarnishing the Disney image" by breathing some new life into what had become incredibly sedate and predictable cartoon characters. Disney won easily. Corporate power always wins the battle against the artist in America. But Walt, who died in 1966, never knew anything about this lawsuit and I've always wished that Walt could have seen those great pages O'Neill and his Air Pirates drew in 1970, because I think he would have laughed his head off. For all his pretentions to highbrow culture [**Fantasia**, for example], Walt was a Kansas boy with a low brow sense of humor.

I don't think many of the lower echelon execs at Disney would understand humor if it jumped out of their computer moniters into their laps. Hey, I saw that **ROGER RABBIT** movie in a mallplex filled with kids one afternoon after it came out in 1988 and I didn't hear one single laugh, not one! There's a message there.

When I was a boy, we looked forward to the new issue of **Walt Disney's Comics and Stories.** It was always filled with good stuff and it cost a dime. 64 pages. Carl Barks had many stories in there from 1943 on. We looked forward to the cartoons and to the features that came out about every two or three years after **SNOW WHITE** in 1937. The Disney stuff was a treat from **C&S** to Gottfredson's strip in the papers. Uncle Scrooge McDuck was great, but he was always kept in check by Donald and his nephews. He was every bit the greedy capitalist, but he never got out of control. Today he has taken control of the Disney empire and there are no checks on him. He has lost that trace of human feeling that always redeemed him in Barks' stories.

I don't think Walt Disney would be very happy to see the direction his company has taken in the nineties. Anyone who has read the early material on EPCOT knows that Walt had in mind something a lot different from what now exists down in Florida.